

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

OMB-01 CU-02 SAM-01 SCCT-01 SY-05 /077 W

----- 070484

R 130610Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2219

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

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HONG KONG FOR RSS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT MY

SUBJ: CONFRONTATION ENDS PEACEFULLY AT MARA INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT) BUT UNDERLYING PROBLEMS
STILL UNRESOLVED

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 0144 (DTG 090624Z JAN 76),

KUALA LUMPUR 0158 (DTG 100400Z JAN 76)

1. CONFRONTATION BETWEEN STUDENTS OCCUPYING MARA INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT) SHAH ALAM CAMPUS ENDED LATE AFTERNOON
JAN 10 WHEN REMAINING 145 STUDENTS "SURRENDERED PEACEFULLY"
(AS LOCAL PRESS PUT IT) TO POLICE. "HARD CORE" STUDENT

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DISSIDENTS INCLUDED 78 FEMALE AND 67 MALE STUDENTS.

FOLLOWING "SCREENING" BY POLICE AND SCHOOL AUTHORITIES, WHO TOOK PHOTOS AND RECORDED PERSONAL DATA, 20 STUDENTS WERE DETAINED, BUT 16 LATER RELEASED FOLLOWING INTERROGATION. CAMPUS NOW GUARDED BY CAMPUS SECURITY PERSONNEL AND POLICE FIELD FORCE (PFF) ELEMENTS.

2. DEVELOPMENTS LEADING TO ENDING OF PROTEST INCLUDED CABINET-LEVEL MEETING CHAIRED BY ACTING PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN JAN 9 TO DISCUSS ISSUE; MEETING OF CHAIRMAN OF MIT GOVERNING COUNCIL, DATUK MANSUR OTHMAN, SAME DAY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF MIT STUDENTS' UNION; PUBLICATION OF CAREFULLY WORDED LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM STUDENT GROUPS AT OTHER LOCAL INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING DEMAND OF MIT STUDENTS FOR OUSTER OF MIT DIRECTOR DATUK LOKMAN MUSA; ENTRY INTO CAMPUS EARLY MORNING JAN 10 BY LARGE NUMBER OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY TO TRY TO PERSUADE SEVERAL HUNDRED REMAINING STUDENTS TO LEAVE (MAJORITY OF WHOM DID LEAVE, BUT WHOSE NAMES WERE RECORDED); UNRESISTED ENTRY INTO CAMPUS BY SPECIAL RIOT POLICE (FEDERAL RESERVE UNIT - FRU) ABOUT NOON, FOLLOWED BY "SURRENDER" OF FINAL GROUP OF STUDENT DISSIDENTS ABOUT 4:00 P.M. JAN 10. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, NO DAMAGE RESULTED FROM STUDENT OCCUPATION.

3. EDUCATION MINISTER DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD CHARACTERIZED LEADERS OF PROTEST AS "COWARDS" WHO RAN AND LEFT GIRL STUDENTS BEHIND. FOLLOWING A VISIT TO THE SCENE HE ADMITTED SERIOUS OVERCROWDING EXISTED AT FACILITY, WHICH ALTHOUGH DESIGNED FOR 4,500 HOUSES ABOUT 7,000 STUDENTS. THIS PUT STRAIN NOT ONLY ON PHYSICAL PLANT BUT ADVERSELY AFFECTED TEACHING LOADS AND DEGREES OF SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS, MAHATHIR ACKNOWLEDGED. HE ADDED THAT MIT CAMPUSES AT SHAH ALAM AND SATELLITE TOWN OF PETALING JAYA ADJACENT KUALA LUMPUR WOULD NOT REOPEN UNTIL A FULL POLICY REVIEW COMPLETED AND A "PROPER PROGRAM" DEvised TO PREVENT REPETITION OF INCIDENT.

3. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR MISMANAGEMENT AT THE SCHOOL AND LESS THAN DEFT IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW DISCIPLINARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CODES WERE MAJOR CAUSAL FACTORS OF THIS PROTEST. WE ARE INTRIGUED BY REPORT, AS YET UNCONFIRMED, THAT STUDENT AGITATOR IBRAHIM ALI WHO RECENTLY RELEASED FOLLOWING YEAR'S DETENTION FOR ROLE IN DECEMBER 1974 STUDENT DISTURBANCES ALLEGEDLY AMONG HARD CORE STUDENTS DETAINED AND IS BEING BLAMED BY ASSOCIATES OF MIT DIRECTOR LOKMAN MUSA AS INSTIGATOR OF OCCUPATION OF MIT. ACCORDING ONE REPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED, EDUCATION MINISTER MAHATHIR APPALLED BY

EXCESSIVE ENROLLMENT AT MIT AND WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE
ENROLLMENT REDUCED BY AS MUCH AS 2,000. SINCE A NUMBER
OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN PROTEST MAY NOT BE RE-REGISTERED,
THIS OBJECTIVE MAY IN PART BE RELIZED. AT THIS POINT,
HOWEVER, FULL RAMIFICATIONS OF INCIDENT NOT YET CLEAR.
(E.G., IT ALSO RUMORED THAT SUPPORTERS OF UMNO YOUTH LEADER
DATO HARUN IDRIS OFFERED THEIR SUPPORT TO THE MIT
DISSIDENTS, PRESUMABLY IN HOPES OF FURTHER EMBARRASSING
MAHATHIR AND THE CABINET.) HOWEVER, FACT GOM IS NOT
GLOATING OVER ITS SUCCESS IN ROUTING THE STUDENT
DEMONSTRATORS BUT RATHER IS ADMITTING THAT PROBLEMS
OF MIT MUST BE RESOLVED IS ENCOURAGING
SIGN, BUT WHETHER CONCRETE REFORMS WILL ACTUALLY BE
IMPLEMENTED (AS CONTRASTED WITH STRICTER DISCIPLINARY
CONTROLS) REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
UNDERHILL

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